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DR. HENRY'S SPEECH AT GENEVA.

## PLAIN REASONS

FOR

# The Great Republican Movement.

What we want; Why we want it; and What will  
come if we fail.

REMARKS MADE AT A PUBLIC MEETING IN GENEVA, N. Y.,

July 19, 1856,

*Caleb Sprague*

BY C. S. HENRY, D.D.

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## DR. HENRY'S SPEECH.

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MR. CHAIRMAN:—I did not come here to make a speech, but to hear one from a far abler man, and I am taken by surprise in being thus called upon. I can only offer a few unpremeditated remarks, by way of slight prelude to the richer treat we may expect from our distinguished friend.

If this were an ordinary political meeting, I should not be here, certainly I should not open my mouth to say a single word. I am not in any sense of the term a party politician. I have never assisted at political meetings, never appeared on political platforms, never spoken, never mixed myself up in any way with party men, party organizations, or party measures. I have abstained from doing so, no less from inclination than from a sense of professional propriety. And if I considered this merely in the light of an ordinary political party movement, you would not see my face or hear my voice in this place. If the question before you were merely a question of political office—one set of men out and another set of men in—and of a new division of the spoils of office; if it were a mere financial or economical question—Free Trade or Tariff, Internal Improvements, Pacific Railroad, or any such question on which the opinions of the country have been, or may now be, divided; I should leave you to settle it among yourselves.

But I cannot so regard it. In my opinion the maintenance of our Constitution, the preservation of the Union, and the progress of christian civilization, are involved in the issues soon to be decided. It is my deliberate and solemn conviction that the dearest interests of Truth, of Justice, of Constitutional Liberty, of the welfare of our nation, and of the whole human race, are at stake. As a christian, as a patriot, and as a lover of human progress, I feel, therefore, not only justified, but bound to unite with those who have these interests at heart, in all lawful and honorable means, for their salvation. That the salvation of these interests in the present crisis depends (as I



admit it does) upon the exertion of political rights and powers, and upon the organization of a great political party, seems to me no reason why I should stand aloof through fear of incurring the reproach of an unseemly mixing in party politics. It is a reproach very convenient for those who use it, but sometimes more convenient for their purpose than just in its application. It may often give to the political perpetrators and abettors of wrong an immunity and an advantage to which they have no title. There are many exigencies in life when duty requires that ordinary considerations of professional delicacy should be laid aside. The present is the greatest crisis that has ever occurred in the history of our country. An outrageous moral wrong has been politically accomplished and is politically upheld. It can only be politically redressed. The means by which you propose to redress it are neither wrong or dishonorable, but constitutional and lawful, fair and right; and I feel bound not to withhold the public expression of my sympathy with your efforts, my hopes for your success.—So much, Sir, I have thought it right to say personally in reference to my appearance here.

Now what is it we, and those who are united with us throughout the country in this great movement—what is it that we all want?

Briefly this, to rescue the General Government from being any longer the instrument for the extension of slavery—to bring back its Administration to the true constitutional ground—to prevent slavery from becoming a national institution—to exclude it from territories now free, and to admit no more Slave States into the Union. This is what we want—what we mean to try for—what we hope, by the blessing of God, to achieve.

But why do we want it? It would be answer enough to this question if we had nothing more to say than simply that such is our wish, until at least some good reason can be shown why we ought not to have such a wish. We like freedom better than slavery; Free States better than Slave States; we would like better to see the General Government employed in extending the area of freedom than that of slavery.

Why then should we not have our way? That is the question. We of the Free States are seventeen millions of people; the free people of the South are six millions, of which the slaveholders number less than three hundred and fifty thousand. With a majority of nearly three to one over all the free people of the South, in a confederacy whose fundamental principle is that the majority shall rule; if

we do not want any more Slave States, that is reason enough why we should have no more, at least until some good reason to the contrary can be shown. What good reason can the South give why we should not have our own way in this matter? Remember the question is not about interfering with slavery where it now legally exists, but about extending it where it does not exist.

Is the extension of slavery into territory now free, the creation of new Slave States, and the control of the Federal Government for this end—a control which the South has had for more than thirty years and of which we propose now to dispossess them,—is this a natural right of the South grounded in the justice of the case? No; this is not pretended.

Is it in the Constitution? No; not a line, not a word of that instrument confers it. The Constitution—the word Slave being excluded with scrupulous and intentional care—provides that “representatives shall be apportioned among the several States, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, *three-fifths of all other persons.*” It provides also that “no person, *held to service or labor* in one State under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on the claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.” These are the words, and all the words. These are all the concessions made to slavery in the Constitution. They were made in the spirit of compromise. They indirectly recognize the existence of Slavery in some of the States, as the mere creature of the laws of those States, and they make certain concessions to its existence there. These concessions are of course to be not loosely, but strictly construed. They say three-fifths of the slaves shall be enumerated in the federal numbers upon which representation in Congress is based; and they say that fugitive slaves shall be delivered up. This is all they say. Does this give the South any claim to demand the extension of slavery and the admission of new Slave States into the Union as a constitutional right? Not the shadow of a claim? It does not come within a thousand miles of looking in that direction.

But if not given in terms, is it implied in the spirit of compromise and concession which presided at the formation of the Constitution? Not at all. The whole history of the framing and adopting of that instrument; the recorded language and known views of its great authors, men of the South as well as of the North; and the whole

administration of the government for some time after its adoption, give the lie to such a pretension. Nothing in the world's history is more absolutely and undeniably demonstrable than that the spirit of compromise and mutual concession in which the Constitution was framed and administered during its early days, was a spirit which recognized slavery as a local institution, to be protected within the limits where it then existed, but kept within those limits—whose extension was not to be provided for, but prevented. I will meet any man in the universe on this ground. There has been a great change in southern feeling since then—in a part of the South at least. They now desire not only the perpetuation of slavery where it exists, but its extension where it does not exist. Very natural, perhaps; but they must look somewhere else than to the spirit of compromise and concession which prevailed at the formation of the Constitution to find any ground on which to rest their claim upon us to let them have their way.

“But,” say the slavery extentionists, “does not the spirit of the Constitution fairly give us, as equal partners to the Union, the right to carry our property into the common Territory of the Union as well as the inhabitants of the Free States?” To be sure, I answer, it gives, to you the right to carry everything that they carry—everything that is “property” in the ordinary and universal acceptation of the term—everything that by natural law and the general consent of mankind is recognized as property, and throughout the civilized world is legally protected as such. But property in men! That is not property by natural law and general consent. It is property only by your local laws. To call it so in the general acceptation of the term, is a vicious abuse of language; and for you to claim the right on this ground, to carry your local laws into all the territories of the Union, is a fallacy you can never make pass with us. As partners to the original compact, you have in fairness no such right; nor in our present mutual relations can you claim it. All well enough, if we choose to concede to you the privilege. We have already conceded largely to your wishes. With no line or word of the Constitution binding us to do so; in utter repugnance to all the ideas and feelings that prevailed when your fathers became parties to the Union, we have let you go on extending slavery, till the Slave States are more than double the original number. And, if we now choose to make no more concessions to slavery extension, you have no title to say a word about unfairness, or deprivation of rights.

The South, then, can show no good reason, binding on us, why we

should not do what we want to do, what we shall attempt to do in a legal and honorable way through the ballot-box.

But we can show good reasons for not wanting any more Slave States—reasons of policy and reasons of principle, which bind us never to give over the struggle, till we have secured the final triumph of our cause, till we have wrested the Federal Government from the control of the slaveholding power, and put a stop to slavery extension.

In the first place, slavery extension is a bad bargain, politically, for the Free States—unequal and unfair. It gives to the Slave States a representation in Congress for their property—what they call property, and claim as such to carry into the territories—while we have no property representation. Three-fifths of their slaves being included in the federal numbers, gives them now *fifteen* representatives more than they would otherwise have. For this concession, we have got practically nothing, and never shall get anything in return. To be sure, we made the bargain with the original Slave States, and we have since consented to the same bargain with nine States more; and we are willing to abide by the bargain.

But between abiding by an unequal bargain, and consenting to go on indefinitely, making bad bargains, there is something of a difference. We may feel bound to the one, but we feel no obligation to the other. Slavery extension is practically, just the entire surrender in perpetuity of the Federal Government, to the supreme control of a small body of southern slaveholders, numbering at this time about three hundred and fifty thousand.

“We want,” says one of the leading organs of the slaveholding interest, the *Richmond Enquirer*, “we want more slave territory for the aggrandizement of slavery, for making it an element of political control, and for giving to the South its just ascendancy.” When it comes to this, we have a word or two to say. We feel no disposition to promote the aggrandizement of slavery, to make it an element of political control, and to give to the South its “just” supremacy over us. On the whole, we rather think we shall resist such a movement.

In the next place, we object to the extension of slavery, because slavery degrades free labor, and prevents the fullest development of the resources of the country. We at the North respect labor—honest free labor. Labor is great, is sacred. Honor to Free Labor, the best source of the wealth and greatness of the nation! We are all laborers at the North, in one way or another; all laborers, and all *free* laborers,

except the "doughfaces"—they are slaves of the southern oligarchy; with slaves' pay. They work under the lash, and when past use are not even provided for, as the law obliges their task-masters to provide for their worn-out negro slaves. Look at the most eminent instance in the nation. Never black slave did his master's bidding with more abject servility, more perfect abnegation of manhood. And how have his masters used him? At the last moment, in his utmost extremity, when he could look nowhere for help, in heaven above or in the earth beneath, save to them alone; when he had every right to expect his promised reward, they have served him as the Evil One is said to serve his sworn slaves in their utmost hour—they have thrown him off their platform, without a particle of remorse or pity, and left him to float down to the gulf of political nothingness, to the gulf of oblivion, but for the everlasting infamy that will attach to the worst and wickedest administration in our nation's annals. There is poetical justice in his fate. Such be the fate of all who sell themselves as tools to do infamous work. But we wish to put an end to such loathsome spectacles of white slavery. The triumph of our cause, will be the extinction of the pernicious race of doughfaces. Once rescue the General Government from the control of the slaveholding power, and their occupation is gone. They will have to turn to some other, it is to be hoped, to some more honorable work—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

But it is of black slavery I am mainly concerned to speak. Free white labor, side by side with slave labor, is put in a position of social degradation. The extension of slavery into our territories, will just shut out the hardy, intelligent, energetic freemen of the North from those vast and fertile regions. We wish them to have the chance of going there, without being put in a position of disgrace and disadvantage. It is their right, and, moreover, it is for the highest good of the States, that are to spring up there; it is for the wealth and welfare, the strength and glory of the whole country, that they should be able thus to go there. For slavery, in all places where free white labor is possible, is economically a bad and thriftless institution. Look at Virginia. She lies side by side with Pennsylvania. Equal, if not superior to the latter in natural advantages—agricultural, mineral, manufacturing—time was when she had the largest population and the most wealth. But now Pennsylvania has double the population, and I presume more than double the wealth of Virginia. What earthly reason can be assigned for this difference, except that slavery exists in one State and not in the other. Slavery has kept Virginia comparatively poor. There are those who say she would starve to death, but for the breed-

ing and sale of slaves to the lower South—the sale of slaves often the fruit of the loins of those who sell them. In 1790, Virginia had half a million of people, while Ohio had less than fifty thousand; in 1850, Virginia had less than a million and a half, all told, and Ohio nearly two millions of intelligent freemen. In other words, sixty years ago, Virginia had more than ten times as many inhabitants as Ohio; now Ohio has half a million the most.

The blighting effects of slavery on population, its numbers and character, and on the wealth of a State, is reason enough why we do not wish its extension. Extend it into our territories, and you shut out free laborers, especially our agricultural laborers, the noble yeomanry who would fill them with people and wealth, as they have filled Ohio and other States. This is neither fair nor wise; and as lovers of fairness, as lovers of our whole country, looking to its physical and its moral wealth and greatness, its honor and glory, we mean, by God's blessing, to resist and defeat the plans of those who would surrender to the curse of slavery those fair regions once solemnly consecrated to freedom.

Again: we object to the extension of slavery, because it is the extension of an institution that has shown itself hostile to freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, freedom to bear arms, freedom to assemble, freedom to petition, freedom of suffrage, freedom to lawfully come and go—in a word, to nearly all the clearest and dearest rights, public and private, civil and political, of persons and of property, recognized by the Constitution as inviolable rights of all the citizens of the United States; hostile to the plainest principles of law and justice; ready to pervert, and when that cannot be done or so easily done, to trample upon all established rules and forms of legislation and of law; to inaugurate the immoral and demoralizing reign of violence and brute force; to use all means, and to stick at nothing; to hold nothing sacred that stands in its way. This is the plain truth, and put in the fewest, the simplest, the softest, the least exaggerated terms in which the truth could be adequately expressed.

The full demonstration of it lies in the history of slavery aggression—lies even in the history of the past two years, of the last few months, and of the last few weeks.

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was the first in the recent series of aggressions. It was the violation of a compromise of more than thirty years standing, environed with all the sacredness of a solemn compact. The South had gained under it all she could gain:

then she broke it. It matters not to say it was brought forward by a northern senator. He was and is also a southern slaveholder, acting in the interest of slavery extension. The South stood by him ; executive influence stood by him ; and enough of democratic northern doughfaces stood by him to accomplish the act. It was accomplished by a sudden springing of the measure in a Congress elected with no such issue in view, but with every reason and right to believe that no question touching slavery would be allowed to come up. It was accomplished in contemptuous disregard of thousands of remonstrances and protests poured into Congress from the North, with not a single petition in its favor from any part of the Union, and, in insolent derision of the well-known feelings of the immense majority of the nation. It was accomplished by despotism and a trick, by trampling on the established immemorial rules of legislation under which the minority rightfully sought to delay the question until the great sense of the nation could be tested by another Congress chosen with reference to the issue. It was accomplished. The thing was wrong ; and the way in which it was done was wrong.

But it was a great mistake on the part of the South to let the thing be done at all. It was what Talleyrand would call "worse than a crime ; it was a *blunder*." Great as was the crime, the blunder was greater. It aroused at the North a feeling that will never rest until a stop is put to the aggressions of the slaveholding power. The day for compromises is past. The Free States will forever honor the names of Hunt, of Bell, of Houston, who resisted the measure. O, if the whole South had stood up like them against this violation of honor and good faith ! What a golden chain of unity would this day have bound the North and South—which no "fanaticism" northern or southern could break or dim. But confidence in southern honor and good faith, where the interests of slavery are concerned, is gone. The irretrievable blunder has been committed. I say irretrievable ; but I ought not perhaps to say it is yet absolutely irretrievable. It is not yet too late for the South to unite with the North in repairing the wrong. But I have no hope for such a thing.

This fatal act—the repeal of the Missouri Compromise—was the prelude to all that has since ensued. The atrocities committed in Kansas I cannot recount. It would take volumes. You know them. They are before you in authentic form : the invasion of the territory by armed ruffians from Missouri—the seizure of the polls—the violence, the threats of death, the strong armed hand, by which the majority of legal voters were overborne—the election carried by near

four thousand Missourian votes—the organization of the usurped legislative power—the tyrannical and cruel laws, repugnant to the Constitution of the United States and violating every human right, laws unparalleled for wickedness in the annals of the world—the best men of the country thrown into prison for pretended offences or hunted out of the land—the avenues to the territory seized, and peaceable immigrants stopped and plundered and compelled to turn back—the whole country devastated by armed marauders—houses and towns sacked and burned—men hunted and harried and bound and murdered—women plundered and abused—and all these enormities directed or connived at by the President of the United States !

The student of history in future ages will read no blacker page than that which contains the record of the scenes in Kansas. They cannot indeed be adequately portrayed ; but enough will go down to future times to move the indignation of all just men. If, indeed, the words that have been said and the deeds that have been done there in the interest of slavery extension, could be stenographed and heliographed exactly as they were said and done, to the eye of future generations, no language is capable of expressing the loathing and abhorrence in which the perpetrators and abettors of those horrible atrocities would be held by all good men from one side of the globe to the other.

But while from the plains of Kansas comes the story of those thousand-fold horrors, we have from the Capitol another pregnant proof of the same violent and brutal spirit of slavery extension. In the Senate-house, the Chamber of the most august body of the nation, a member of that body, busy at his desk, unsuspecting of intended harm, unprepared, confined by his seat, is stricken down by a member of the other House, by a bludgeon stroke upon his unprotected head, and rendered senseless by numerous repeated blows inflicted with savage violence, and continued until the assailant was at length torn from his victim. The nature of the weapon, the manner of the attack, the violence and the persistency of the assault—all the circumstances of the case, mark the act not only as cowardly and brutal, but equally murderous in its character, if not in its intention, as it was deliberately planned.

But it is not merely that the person of Mr. SUMNER was brutally outraged—his life endangered, and his great faculties—if life be spared—it is to be feared, impaired for the rest of his days ; it is not merely that the dignity of the sovereign state of Massachusetts has been outraged in the person of her senator, and her bright to her senator's voice and vote taken from her at this great crisis ; it is that



the majesty of the nation has been outraged, a great constitutional principle trampled on—a principle as important, at least, and more sacred than the principle involved in the two-penny tax on tea, and six-penny tax on stamps that awoke the spirit of 1776. Massachusetts is my native State. Senator Sumner is my friend of twenty years. But I do not speak thus strongly on that account. If he himself had perpetrated a like outrage on a senator from South Carolina, I should characterize his act in the same strong terms as I have the act of Mr. Brooks.

The act was as utterly without excuse, as it was cowardly and ruffianly. The pretext alleged was flimsy and false. Mr. Sumner's reply to a series of wanton, irritating, and in many instances, unparliamentary personal attacks from his fellow-senators, was perfectly parliamentary. Some may doubt whether it were wise or in good taste; I am sorry he did not reply to the insults he received, in the tone and terms of serene, good-natured contempt; but he said nothing that he had not a parliamentary right to say. I do not believe there is a man of sense in the country, of competent acquaintance with the rules of parliamentary debate, that thinks otherwise. But even if it were otherwise, the act of Mr. Brooks was none the less a deliberate, dastardly, assassin-like act. His name will go down to posterity as a synonym for whatever is cowardly and brutal and murderous in the manner of taking "satisfaction" for alleged insult. Yet the South uphold him. Compliments and honors, presents of canes and tokens of favor, addresses and resolutions from public meetings, have been showered upon him; and throughout the South, with a solitary exception, I believe, the whole press has justified or applauded his course, and some of them have invoked the perpetration of similar outrages upon Mr. Seward and other eminent members of Congress obnoxious to the slaveholding power; and this is the last proof I shall allege of the truth of what I have said respecting the hostility of the spirit of slavery extension to freedom of speech, and to our clearest and dearest rights, and of its demoralizing and brutalizing tendencies.\*

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\* Since the above was spoken, the resolution to expel Mr. Brooks from the House of Representatives, reported by the Committee charged with the investigation of the affair, has been lost for want of the Constitutional majority of two-thirds. The fair fame of the nation stands therefore tarnished before the world. The only consolation is, that a large majority voted for the resolution to expel. Mr. Brooks thereupon resigned his seat and solicited a reelection from his constituents, on the sole ground of his heroic exploit in assaulting Senator SUMNER. He has been unanimously reelected, has returned and taken his seat again. All this only goes to give added justification to what I have said. Mr. Brooks' reelection, under the circumstances, I do not scruple to call

But it is said in justification or excuse, that northern opposition to slavery extension (conveniently styled abolitionism), has itself to thank for these atrocities. No doubt, if the North had without murmur or resistance permitted the South to have its way, these brutal and wicked scenes would never have occurred. All would have gone on in sweet peace. But what is this in principle? What, but to consecrate the burglar's or highwayman's trade, who says, with a pistol at your breast, "make no resistance and no cry, or death is your instant fate?" So, indeed, the horrors of our Revolutionary War would have been avoided, had our forefathers offered no resistance to British usurpation. What is this but to justify the murder, if you do not submit to the robbery? I am not so much surprised at this plea coming from the South. It is a way of feeling that naturally and always springs up in the relations between a superior and a degraded race, between the lord and the slave. The instinct of self-preservation prompts them to overbear all opposition to their own will, to punish terribly all resistance, to tolerate neither murmur or remonstrance. But that such a plea should ever be put forth by anybody at the North in justification or in excuse for atrocities, the recital of which makes the blood curdle with horror; that the immense majority of the people of the North should be reproached for those atrocities by anybody among us; this, I confess, excites my surprise and—some other feelings hard to be repressed, but scarcely possible to be adequately expressed. I, for one, am willing to share with you, Sir, with you, Gentlemen, all the obloquy of resisting the further extension of slavery, all the responsibility which in the great judgment of God, may attach to us for the crimes which that resistance may provoke. "Lie down, dog, that I may pass over thy body," said the feudal Baron, meeting the Jew at the fearful pass, overhanging the precipice, where two persons could find no footing—"lie down, dog." We cannot lie down, there is more at stake than our poor lives. God shield the right.

Once more: we object to the extension of slavery on moral grounds. It is not necessary to go into any discussion of the abstract rightfulness or wrongfulness of slavery. Logical deductions from metaphysi-

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an indecency and an insult on the part of his constituents, to the House and the Nation. But the Constitution provides no means by which Congress and the nation can be protected from such an insult by such an electoral district. It were well it did. Mr. Brooks has received the formal approbation of his constituents, but this will not in the least exempt his conduct and theirs from the contempt and reprobation of all just and honorable men throughout the civilized world.

cal principles of absolute right, when carried recklessly out in practical application to great social questions, are often very absurd and mischievous, and on no question more mischievous than on this of slavery. Whether the abstract question of right or wrong, in regard to it, be or be not determinable by any absolute demonstration, it is not necessary for us to decide it in order to justify our moral repugnance to its extension. It is quite enough to say that it is an institution not grounded in natural justice, in any general theory of human rights—that wherever it exists, it can be justified, if at all, only as an abnormal and exceptional state of society, and that it inevitably entails a large train of social and moral evils. It is not necessary to denounce its existence or its provisional continuance in the States where it now is, as a sin and crime. It is there as an institution, for whose establishment the present people of the South are not responsible. A large mass of persons of a different and an inferior race, ignorant and degraded, are among them, whom the laws and customs of many generations have subjected, to a certain extent, to the disposal and control of the superior race. So numerous is this class, in many of the States especially, that it may be, no other relation is possible or safe, compatible with social order or the welfare of both classes. Any salutary modification of the existing relation, must be the work of time. Immediate emancipation would be a curse to the South, and no mercy to the slaves. So I think and so I have elsewhere said. I am not going to pass any sweeping condemnation upon the Southern Slaveholder. As things now are, it may be quite right for him to hold Slaves. It is indeed his duty to hold them as human beings, consulting their welfare, and not merely his own advantage, to abstain from abusing his power, and to prevent and mitigate, as far as he can, the hardships and evils inevitably incident to such a relation. But thus holding them, it may be not only his right, but his duty to exercise that control and disposal of their persons and labor which the laws vest in him.

All this may be true, and it may also be true that there are many redeeming points about the institution in its actual working at the South, many bright aspects, many benefits to the slave as well as to his master. But at the same time it is none the less true that the evils are such and so great as should forever prevent its extension into lands where it does not now exist.

The true normal state of society is that in which the population is homogeneous, where all are intelligent enough and morally elevated enough to be safely trusted with the disposal of their persons and labor. Such a state of society, wherever it is possible, we are sure is

socially and morally (as well as economically) the best. It squares best with our ideas of natural justice, with our ideas of the most desirable civilization, the civilization springing from the fullest development of the genius and spirit of the Christian Religion. It is most favorable to the comfort and happiness, the peace and order, the virtue and purity of all the members of a commonwealth. Slavery on the other hand, is repugnant to the true idea of a normal social state. It is not based in natural justice. It is exceptional in any general theory of human rights. It implies a state of society in which there must be a large class of human beings too ignorant and degraded to be safely trusted with the disposal of themselves; for otherwise the institution has no *moral* basis at all; no basis but the mere immoral right of the strongest—a right which we at the North shall never consent to consecrate by the needless extension of slavery into territories where it does not now exist. Take slavery into our territories and you must have there large masses of human beings of an inferior race, not only ignorant and degraded; but you must keep them ignorant and degraded, you must keep them too ignorant and degraded for self-disposal and self-control. Slavery necessitates the eternal perpetuation of human ignorance and degradation. Now we say it is wrong to go about needlessly, for any end of selfish advantage, to create such a social state. Slavery, too, inevitably entails a great train of social and moral evils, not merely hardships and cruelties from the abuse of power, but peculiar sources of vice and corruption which eat into the very core of the social state.

To consent then to the extension of slavery, is in our view wrong. Let the South keep their institution where it is, if they choose. It is possibly the best thing they can do, either now or for a long time to come; but it is a bad state of things at the best, and we hope they may in time find a way to be rid of it and be disposed to adopt it. But to extend it—that is another thing. The whole moral sense of the North is against it.

These are the reasons—reasons that we deem sound and sufficient—why we go for the rescuing the Federal Government from being any longer the instrument for the extension of slavery, and for putting an end to the aggressions of the South. So much for what we want, and why we want it.

And now what will come of it if we fail of success in our great movement?

This will come of it. The Federal Government will continue to be

what it has for so many years been—the tool of the slaveholding power. The great wrong done by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise will go unredressed and irreparable. Kansas will be lost to Freedom. The triumph of successful wickedness will be complete. The great crimes, the frauds, the bloody atrocities perpetrated there, will go not only unredressed, but sustained. The demoralizing reign of brute violence, inaugurated at the Capitol, and upheld and glorified by the South, will be established and consecrated. In short, our failure will be the triumph of the policy of slavery extension, entailing upon us all the evils—political, economical, social, and moral—that I have portrayed.

The subjugation of Kansas will be only the beginning of a long series of aggressions. The Repeal of the Missouri Compromise has opened to slavery a territory larger than all the old Thirteen States together. The plans of the slaveholding power embrace the acquisition of it all—Nebraska, Oregon, one half of California. They embrace too the carving perhaps of four or five States out of Texas to swell the slavery majority in the Senate. They embrace the absorption of the rest of Mexico, and of Central America, the acquisition, by fair means or foul, of Cuba, and, finally, alliance with Brazil, for the re-opening of the African Slave Trade, and so the establishment of the empire of slavery from its present northernmost line to the southernmost point of the American Continent. These are its plans, gigantic indeed, but well considered, firmly resolved. They are not idle visions of alarmed northern imagination. If I had time, I could bring you ample proof from the leading organs of slavery propagandism. More than two years ago, the project of getting possession of Cuba, to secure the command of the Gulf of Mexico, and of alliance with Brazil to revive the African Slave Trade, was openly avowed. "*The want of Slavery*" said the *Charleston Standard*, "*is the Slave Trade.*" *We will demand its re-establishment within this Union, or we will re-establish it ourselves.*" And the *Charleston Mercury* and the *Richmond Examiner* declared themselves distinctly to the same effect. So much in the way of southern plans of slavery extension.

And as to aggressions on the Free States, let us not fondly hug the delusive notion that we have had the last of them. In 1850, we at the North consented to the passage of a law by which the duty of carrying into effect the Constitutional provision for the delivery of fugitive slaves, was imposed upon the Federal Government. We thought, indeed, it was pressed by the South, less for its material advantage, than

as a moral triumph over the North. Yet we yielded to it, however repugnant the operation of it might be to our feelings, because it was clearly the right of the South, under the original compact, to be able in some way to get back their runaway slaves. But not satisfied with this, the next thing was the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, giving them the right to carry their slaves into all the territories of the Union. Then the claim to bring their slaves into the Free States and hold them was set up. This was the LEMMON slave case. This claim is still pending in the Federal courts. Grant this, and the soil of the Free States becomes a national highway for the transit and transportation of slaves; and then it is but a step to convert the soil of the Free States into a national mart for slave dealers, with New York for a convenient *entrepot* for the trade, bringing the slave-breeding supply of Virginia into communication with the slave consuming demand of the lower South. Concede the claim, and there is nothing in the Constitution of the United States, nothing in the laws of Massachusetts, that could prevent the literal accomplishment of the insolent threat uttered by a southern senator, that he would yet call the roll of his slaves on Bunker Hill. He could do so if he chose—with Federal bayonets to protect him against the indignation of the outraged people of the place. And then, when the legal prohibition of the African Slave Trade is repealed, the North would be compelled to see all her ports open to the prosecution of the infamous traffic, and the miscreants who carry it on, boldly fitting out for the African coast, and returning with their live cargoes to be consigned, if they chose, to slave pens in New York, guarded by Federal artillery, manned by Federal troops.

And then think you the slaveholding power which is so madly exasperated against all utterance, by speech or by the press, of opinions unfavorable to the "peculiar institution," which by legal penalties and by illegal violence represses and punishes it within the Slave States, not only practically destroying the Constitutional rights of northern men to go and come there, but driving into exile their own citizens for the utterance or suspicion of such opinions—think you the South will be content to leave us free, even in the North, to speak and write our sentiments on slavery? No! they call it treason now. They will demand Federal laws to make it such. And judging of the future by the past, they will have them too, if we fail to rescue the Federal Government from their control. Where shall we then be? What will the Union then be worth to us?

These are the things that will come of our failure in the great struggle that has begun. These are the results that will follow the

final triumph of the South. What a spectacle will our nation then present to the astonished world. What a spectacle of rational freedom, of a great christian civilization! If such is to be the issue; if the policy of slavery extension is to be maintained and to triumph, and all the wrongs and evils inevitably bound up with it entailed upon us and upon our children; if the Constitution in its legitimate construction, in its whole spirit and intention, is to be overborne, and nothing left but its letter and form, and that an instrument of violence and wrong, for the prostration of our dearest rights, and the prevention of the noblest progress, the true welfare and glory of the nation; I for one say frankly I have no interest in the maintenance of the Constitution and in the preservation of the Union. Let the Constitution go in its form and letter, when its spirit and essence are gone. Let the Union go, when it becomes only a Union for wrong and evil.

But we wish to save the Constitution. We wish to bring back the government to its old true constitutional ground. We wish in this way to save the Union and to make it worth the saving. The great heart of the North clings to the Union, if it can by any possibility be kept worth preserving. This is the secret of her so many concessions thus far to slavery aggression. But now we have a different notion of the true way of saving the Union from that which has hitherto prevailed at the North. To yield to every demand of the slaveholding power, is no longer regarded as the way to save the Union. The true way to save the Union, as we now understand it, is to put a stop to slavery agitation, by putting a stop to slavery extension; by maintaining the Constitution in its clear legitimate interpretation as the paramount law of the nation. This will save the Union, and make it worth saving; and in this way we mean to try to save it.

But it is said that our triumph in the present crisis will be the signal for the dissolution of the Union; for that "the South will never submit" even to the election of Mr. Fremont for President. A more absurd utterance was never made; and I am surprised (more surprised even than grieved) that it should have come from one who has been President of the United States, and is now a candidate for that great office. It may have been made as a bid for Southern votes; but it will lose him more votes at the North than he will gain at the South: nor are we bound to grieve for that. But it is untrue. Be not alarmed. The South has heard the prophetic threat made in their behalf in blank silence—with no response. It is not true. Time was when the threat of secession was a potent brag. Then the South used it. That time

has passed away—never to return. It has lost all its terror for the North, and the South knows it has, and ceases to use it. It was never, I think, anything but a brag. Secession is a luxury the South cannot afford to indulge in. The Union is the very buttress of southern slavery. The South needs the Union more than we do. She knows that we now know it; and whatever threats a few hot-headed braggarts may have uttered, the wise men of the South are too sagacious to dream of secession—for a long time to come at least.—They want the Union for their present security; and for the extension of slavery. No doubt there are far-seeing men at the South, whose views embrace the policy of using the Union as the means of realizing the gigantic plans I have sketched; and then, when they may be strong enough to stand without the Union, to let the Union go—if the Free States refuse to be their subservient tools; otherwise of course, never. But the realization of these plans is a long way in the future. And meantime they have no thought of dissolving the Union. Mr. Fillmore says the South will not submit to your success in the coming election. I think she will submit to that, and to a great deal more.—You propose nothing unconstitutional, nothing that conflicts with her constitutional rights. You propose to leave her in full possession of every constitutional right she has. She is well aware of the necessity of putting up with half a loaf, when she cannot get the whole. I have no doubt that, in one way or the other, with a good grace or with a bad grace, she will submit.

Let us then to the great work before us. By all that is sacred and dear to the heart of the patriot, by our love for our country, her welfare and her glory; by our love for the cause of civilization and human progress let us to the work. And may that God whose Providence is the Genius of Human History, bless the righteous cause, and crown our efforts with success. It is a cause that sooner or later, if not now, will surely triumph. The great moral sense of the nation, the moral sense of the civilized world is with us. This is an element of prodigious power—moral power, the greatest, in the long run the most unconquerable of all power. We have it—our opponents lack it, and know and feel the lack of it. In short, God and the Great Ages are on our side, and the final triumph of our cause is sure.



## NOTE.

## THE THREAT OF DISUNION.

I have said above that Mr. Fillmore's prophetic threat has found no response at the South. This was true at the time I said so. But since the first edition of my remarks was published, the policy of echoing the cry of disunion has been taken up at the South, and by haranguers at the North. It is taken up for political effect, without any faith in its truth, as I think. It may possibly have something of the intended effect upon ill-informed, timid, selfish, and mean-spirited persons. But it is none the less the most foolish of all foolish predictions; and those who make it deserve to be branded as traitors.

The notion of the dissolution of the Union as a consequence of the election of Mr. Fremont, or of anything that will ensue under his administration of the government, is supremely absurd. *A warlike attempt at secession would ruin the South; and a peaceful secession, even if it could be accomplished, would be no less ruinous. The South cannot dissolve the Union, if it would; and would not if it could.*

But even if it were otherwise, is there a man at the North so base as to succumb to such a threat, to be deterred by it from voting for the man of his choice? Let us stand for the right, whatever comes. The responsibility for the consequences belongs to those who utter the threat. *Better no Union than the subjugation of the Free States to be mere tools for the extension of slavery and the perpetual domination of an oligarchy like that represented by Preston S. Brooks.*

NEW YORK, October 4, 1856.





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